

Questions and Answers

Q. What does it mean when you say the charges will be "dismissed?"

A. The case will no longer be pending in front of the court and cannot be brought back in front of the court. Dismissal of the charges is similar to a finding of "not guilty".

Q. Will it show on my record?

A. No. The record will show that you were charged with a misdemeanor, but that the charges were dismissed.

Q. Will I have to report this on a job or college application?

A. That depends on the question asked. If the application asks if you have been charged with a crime, the answer is "yes". If the application asks if you were convicted of a crime, the answer is NO.

Q. Where will I have to go to do the community service hours?

A. We have numerous locations in Lynchburg that we assign for community service including Parks and Recreation, the Salvation Army, Jubilee Family Center, Lynchburg Grows, White Rock Education Center, Fire Department, and many others.

**For additional
information about
Community Court
please contact:**

Address:

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www.ocalynchburg.com



Lynchburg Community Court

*Is This An Option
For You?*

Juvenile Misdemeanor
Offenses and Parents/
Guardians of Truant
Youth

What Is Community Court?

In Community Court, participants are held accountable through participation in a variety of community and social service activities. This court takes a closer look at the problems and circumstances that offenders may be dealing with and works with the community to resolve them.

What Is The Difference Between Community Court And Traditional Court?

- In the traditional court offenders are typically jailed, fined, or receive probation time. In Community Court there are no fines or court costs. *(Exception— There is a non-waivable \$120 fee for a court appointed attorney)* The sentence or Recommendation in Community Court consists of community and social service hours and is usually completed in one to two months.
- In Community Court the judge, the prosecutor, and a team of community advisors take a closer look at the individual and circumstances that place them at greater risk for committing crime. The traditional court system does not have the ability to review cases in this manner.
- In Community Court the charges against a person will be dismissed as long as they complete the Recommendations (similar to a sentence) presented by the disposition team (panel of community members) and the prosecutor. The judge makes the final decision.

Who Can Participate?

Youth ages 13-17 charged with non-violent misdemeanor crimes, including truancy, and parents of truant children charged with contributing to the delinquency of a minor.

Who Manages Community Court?

The Office of the Commonwealth's Attorney is responsible for the day to day operations of the Community Court. However, the judge is the overall manager of the court room and makes all final decisions.

How Does Community Court Work?

At advisement in General District Court, you will have the option to participate in Community Court or traditional court. If you chose to participate in Community Court you will be asked to go through the steps outlined below.

If you have an attorney, he/she may be present during all proceedings.

Step 1. You/your child will go before the judge and plead guilty or "no contest" to the charges against you. The court will find that there are facts sufficient to find you guilty, but will NOT do so at that time. Instead, the court will take the matter under advisement until

Please ask questions if you don't understand!

- Community Court Process Continued -

Step 2. You/your child will be asked to sit down with an evaluator who will talk with you about things you would like to do in your life but have not been able to as well as problems you may be dealing with.

Step 3. After meeting with you/your child, the evaluator will meet with a panel of community advisors called a "disposition team." The team will review your case and make community and/or social service Recommendations based on the type of crime, where you/your child live, what needs you may have, and available transportation.

(students will not be required to participate in any community service projects outside of school hours with the exception of counseling or other social service needs)

Step 4. The Recommendations are then presented to the judge by the prosecutor. After the judge accepts the "guilty or "no contest" plea (refer to Step 1.), he will review the Recommendations made by the disposition team and chose to accept, change, or decline them.

Step 5. Once the Recommendation is accepted by the judge (court), it will be explained to you/your child in detail. You will receive a copy of the Recommendation which includes the number of hours you have been assigned, the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of the agencies you have been referred to, the date you are to complete your hours by, and the date to return to court for review of your progress.

6. The entire Recommendation must be completed by the court ordered date. If the Recommendation has been completed, you will be given a certificate of completion from the court and the charges will be dismissed.